The Artist Within: A Thesis on the Arts and Children with Special Needs

An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)

by

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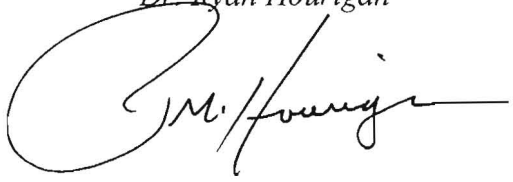

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Abstract

This thesis presents an investigation of the arts as they pertain to therapeutic processes with children who have autism. Through formulating an observational study, I structured a program that offered various art and dance activities to children struggling with autism near the Muncie area. Three male participants, varying in age (7-18) and level of functioning (low/med/high) made up the study's demographics. In measuring creativity, eye contact, warmth through body language, and attentiveness, the study promoted participants' natural responses to weekly tasks. Ultimately, the objective in gathering data over six weeks pursued whether art and dance were empirically effective in "making a connection" with the participants involved.

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The Artist Within: A Thesis on the Arts and Children with Special Needs

A defining factor in life rests on an outlet of communication with other individuals—a need for connection. In fact, it could be argued that the core of humanity pursues the gratification of a fundamental desire to be known and loved. John Bowlby's defining work on attachment theory supports this basic need for developing positive and supportive relationships with others (Dixon, 2003). He claims that relationship starts with an innate evolutionary set of adaptive behaviors that keep a child close to his mother. From this stage of infancy, a strong attachment with a primary caregiver helps to construct a mental model or cognitive map, fundamental to interactions with the rest of the world (Dixon, 2003). But this cognitive map can become ineffective when in the presence of a disability. Autism, for example, presents a whole slew of behaviors that are viewed as odd and unwanted in most social contexts (Epp, 2008). Rather than experiencing relationships, people struggling with disabilities are often left misunderstood and estranged from society.

Psychologists are just beginning to discover how artistic expression can serve as a medium of connection for the disabled (Epp, 2008; Martinec, 2013). Over the course of my collegiate career, I have investigated how creative outlets have proven to be successful in doing so with individuals on the autistic spectrum. Pursuing the source of this potential, I examined the realities of autism, explored techniques of arts therapies, and staged a six week program to gather observations of my own. The results of this thesis present both the research done by forerunners in the field of Creative Arts Therapy and the cumulative data gathered from a self-led observational case study. Having focused on autism in adolescence, the question posed is a simple one: can art and dance make a connection with children who are so easily alienated from the world?

Review of Literature

The autistic spectrum covers a vast array of disorders and specific diagnoses that hinder appropriate social behavior (Epp, 2008). Generally speaking, the stimuli that come from public environments can be overwhelming to someone with autism. Loud noises and large crowds over-stimulate the brain, which then evokes severe anxiety and fear (Epp, 2008). Furthermore, the disorder impairs understanding and use of proper language, intonation, gestures, and notable nonverbal skills (Payne, 1992). Poor processing and misuse of vocal tonality, eye contact, and facial expression encourage the all-too-inviting prospect of disengagement. And by the end of a normal day, the stresses of interacting with others are overwhelmingly debilitating (Epp, 2008). Because of this increasing isolation, autism is considered a communication disability, confining its victims to a chronically anxious existence spent withdrawn from social interaction.

Children in particular face large amounts of stress due to the stage of life that spans elementary, middle, and high school years. While kids have their own personalities and quirks, adolescence ushers in the process of learning what is considered socially appropriate. Surrounded by peers who do not understand them, children with autism face various levels of bullying as they attempt to function in a world they do not understand. Outside perspectives describe these children as being socially awkward, stiff, emotionless, self-absorbed, and oblivious (Epp, 2008). One description in a dance movement therapy article by Tina Erfer observes that: "Children with autistic behavior may appear to be at any point on a range from seeming to need to block out perceived sensory overload to seeming to crave more and more stimulation" (Erfer, 1995). In either case, the autistic persona is a restless nature that can make people who are unfamiliar with the disorder extremely uncomfortable.

Though a general sense of misunderstanding holds responsibility for alienation, there is a much greater issue present in the brain of an individual with autism (Erfer, 1995). Theory of

mind—the concept that people have thoughts, ideas, and ways of thinking that differ from one's own thoughts and ideas—is inherently missing. Essentially, a child on the autistic spectrum doesn't understand that there are any other thoughts or opinions outside of his/her own. This means that disciplinary consequences and others' reactions often fall on deaf ears, limiting hope for successful communication (Epp, 2008). Instead, five very specific characteristics mark the presence of autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

- Self-stimulation/preservation: Some children with ASD are chaotically active, while others are lethargic and passive. They display self-stimulating and preservative behaviors in the presence of actions like hand flapping, rocking, or even banging their heads on various objects.
- Motor control: Problems with motor control cause an assortment of behaviors including grimacing or jumping up and down when excited, bending at the waist, walking on the toes, and rocking back and forth from one foot to another.
- Disinterest in language: Their disinterest in language influences incorrect use of pronouns or slurred speech.
- Over-stimulation: Levels of stimulation depend entirely on the child. Loud noises could cause immediate distress for some, while others are troubled by softer, repetitive, naturally occurring noises. They may have difficulty recognizing things or people and are distractedly fascinated with lights and shiny objects.
- Resistance to change: Routine is favorable to kids with ASD. When change is present, the response is often panic, anger, or withdrawal (Erfer, 1995).

In an interview I conducted with a parent who has raised children on the spectrum, I asked her how she would define autism, concerning its effect on daily life. She responded, "Anxiety. I think anxiety is at the forefront of everything for unlocking the puzzle of my children—how to

reduce it, how to anticipate it…that's what we do. Anxiety gets in the way of everything." The characteristics of autism and the prevalence of anxiety that seems to permeate daily living have increased levels of concern. Kathleen Epp's study done on *Outcome-Based Evaluation of a Social Skills Program Using Art Therapy and Group Therapy for Children on the Autism Spectrum* presents a relationship between the vast array of challenges that make kids with ASD "different" and the higher probability in onset of depression (2008). Ultimately, from this heightened depression, roughly 20 percent of children and adolescents suffering from developmental delays attempt suicide (Gargiulo, 2003). Because of this, a greater push for intervention has been prominent in psychological research—an area where the arts have shown promising potential.

Dance Movement Therapy. The *American Dance Therapy Association* defines Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) as "the psychotherapeutic use of movement to further the emotional, cognitive, physical and social integration of the individual" (Martinec, 2013). The use of movement in DMT as the sole medium of communication connects mind, body, and spirit of an individual to describe various elements of health and the psyche (Stanton-Jones, 1992). The focus is most prominently on the "inner reality," or the meaning of movement as seen in gestures, larger movement in the space, and posture (Feder & Feder, 1998). While relying heavily on nonverbal communication, this form of therapy is especially helpful for individuals who do not have standard verbal communication capabilities (Stanton-Jones, 1992). It is a slow and gradual process, which requires the sensitivity of the therapist in response to familiar movement pattern choices made by the client (Parteli, 1995). Ultimately, because of the dominant use of the body, this therapy translates positive influences into various psychological and social skill sets.

Dance has played an important role in self-expression for a matter of centuries, but did not receive attention as a form of therapy until the twentieth century. In the 1940's, Dance Movement Therapy began through the experimentation of dance and movement with psychotherapeutic applications. Its origination has developed into a much more flexible mold today, where it fulfills both primary intervention roles and supportive, adjunctive therapy (Martinec, 2013). While the first (primary intervention) has more of a strict tie to psychotherapy in structure, the second (adjunctive therapy) allows for more freedom in creativity, form, and function. All of DMT rests on a set of principles as discussed by Levy in *Dance Movement Therapy: A Healing Art*. These principles revolve around unifying the relationship between a person's mind, body, and the external environment. As movement encompasses symbolism and reflection of personality, it can be evidence of unconscious processes. And through the progress of working through the unconscious, the relationship that develops between a therapist and a patient is often navigated non-verbally (Levy, 1988). The therapist targets the improvement of both self-concept and interpersonal dynamics by compiling the various theoretical principles at the core of dance movement therapy (Martinec, 2013).

Practically speaking, these principles offer different approaches and perspectives to the manipulation of movement. Imitation, or the exact physical replication of movement connects the therapist to the client's movement patterns and feelings. Mirroring creates a mirror effect between the therapist and client, where the movement is imitated with freedom to alter or modify certain qualities without jeopardizing the movement's integrity (Martinec, 2013). Authentic Movement is based on more of a free, unstructured improvisation in which space between people in the environment and the space in the environment as a whole is heavily emphasized. Such an emphasis is intended to build connections between the self, others, and the surrounding space (Adler, 2003). Lastly, the Aesthetic Listening Approach translates listening and responding from

a strictly verbal sense to a movement-based mode of communication. Sometimes this requires redirecting negative, self-destructive movements to more positive approaches, utilizing choreography to reinforce positive behavior (Parteli, 1995). Because dance can be such a fluid construct, many therapy sessions float between each of these approaches, even using a few simultaneously as needed.

The key is finding a way to listen and respond nonverbally, to connect. For the realities of autism, this connection is essential. DMT can utilize the very movements that characterize common stereotypes and bodily distortions in autism as a means of communication. What can result is a moment of clarity in which the therapist catches a glimpse of the mover's thoughts, and the mover achieves understanding of those around him.

Art Therapy. Similarly, art therapy is a form of therapy that encourages individuals to search for solutions and work through negative emotions by means of visual representation (Epp, 2008). With a foundation in Freud and Jung's theories of the subconscious and unconscious, the use of visual images as symbols in art therapy serves as the primary mode of communication. This nonverbal process is two-fold in creating art and investigating it's meaning, in order to foster a space for addressing difficult emotions (Ford-Martin, 2011). Because the process is such a concrete way of thinking and working through information, a client can indirectly express unspoken fears and conflict in a safe environment. This allows the client to engage in a cathartic experience that promotes self-discovery, empowerment, and confidence building (Ford-Martin, 2011).

Art as a solitary entity can, in fact, take the form of a unique language. Though not verbal, it contains similar elements to verbal languages in a conventional system of symbols and their meanings. In analyzing a verbal conversation, there are receptive and expressive forms of communication. Receptive communication suggests a cognitive understanding of words that

make up a language. Expressive communication transforms understanding into communicated ideas through speaking or writing under the rules of that language. Both of these exist in art, but are codified through images instead of words. In art, receptive language exists through the reading and interpretation of visual symbols. These symbols or markings are used accordingly to express a specific meaning or message (Eubanks, 1997). Perhaps, the most unique aspect of art as a form of communication in therapy is the absence of verbal communication to work through issues.

Specifically, Epp's study on using art therapy to promote social skills affirms the effectiveness of art as a therapeutic medium for children with autism. This particular form of therapy offers a nonthreatening way of dealing with the challenges and rejections that coincide with the disorder. After having established a comfortable environment, the therapeutic process encourages problem solving in a visual manner. For children, especially children with ASD, thought processes occur on a very visual and concrete level of thinking. As such, they remember visual representations like images or symbols better than they do verbal cues. Art therapy offers an avenue of expression and a platform for teaching necessary skills by playing to the strengths of a child with autism (Epp, 2008). Epp makes the claim that, "Through the child's art, the therapist can gain insight into what the child is experiencing, which is information that is not readily available through verbal means" (2008). This reasoning supports the idea that the arts take habits already instilled in autistic behavior to establish a more effective mode of communication.

While art making can be fun and relaxing, it also helps in achieving developmental goals. Such an emphasis on nonverbal expression encourages the child creating the artwork to practice representation of their experiences. And where verbal language skills may be deficient, the art therapy process fits a better mold for how a child functions on the spectrum. The medium allows

for a wide variety of diversity regarding the visual and tactile senses. From paint to play dough, colors and textures allow for assistance in sensory regulation, keeping activities engaging and exciting. Above all, the adaptability that art has for meeting the needs of children across all levels of functioning allows an enormous scope of techniques for most situations (Duranni, 2014). What is extended, then, is an opportunity for children facing many different challenges to cope, grow, and develop needed social and life skills.

Integration/My Vision. For two methods of therapy that seem to have a similar focus of nonverbal interaction and responsiveness to the client, conclusive inferences suggest a relationship between the two. Yet, little if any research has been done on integrating these methods together as one. In an effort to pursue this for my thesis, I structured a six-week observational study of three children on the autistic spectrum, varying in age and level of functioning. While meeting every Saturday for six weeks, we explored new avenues of using art and dance as forms of interaction. A measuring system was incorporated that would determine whether or not their involvement with the arts increased confidence levels in communicating with others (see Fig. 1). This system was taken from two different perspectives that observed both the group as a whole and a singular participant's behavior throughout the entire experience. Over the six weeks, I recorded one participant under the following categories: the amount of times eye contact was made each session, the level of warmth displayed in this participant's body language towards me (i.e. distant, wave, smile, high five, hug), and the length of time he participated in each activity before becoming distracted or withdrawn. Pictures and video captured all of the activities to measure the saturation, or the extent of detail and creative freedom, taken by all three participants. These different perspectives were established to capture both individual behavior and overall performance.

Hypothesis. I proposed that using artistic modes of communication would increase the willingness and depth of social interaction in physical contact, verbal content, and emotional connection. More specifically, as I recorded eye contact, body language, and length of participation time in activities, I hypothesized that levels would increase for all three by the end of the program. Concerning the group as a whole, I predicted that the further we went into the six week experience, the more detailed and confident the children would become in their movement and art making.

Method

Participants

As previously stated, there were three participants involved in my thesis who were on some level of the autistic spectrum. The Prism Project, a performing arts project at Ball State for children with special needs, served as a primary pool for gathering these participants. Utilizing contacts from past experience with Prism, I emailed parents to inform them of the opportunity and received back confirmation from those who were interested. Demographics for this study encompassed a representative from high, middle, and low functioning levels on the spectrum, as determined by their placements in Prism's pre-set structure. The resulting participants were seven, sixteen, and seventeen-year-old males. Peter, the seven year old, was lowest on the scale with poor motor skills and speech. Conner was the sixteen year old selected from the intermediate level of functioning, and had both autism and Down syndrome. His participation and behavior served as the primary focus throughout the project, as his responses were recorded. David, the seventeen-year-old, was the highest functioning participant in the group. All three participants experienced the same conditions.

For the purposes of encouraging a comfortable environment, volunteer students who had experience with the Prism project were recruited from Ball State to pair up with the participants.

This buddy system is used in the Prism Project, and its integration was intended to promote familiarity for the children. Alongside their assistance, a fellow student was trained to fulfill the primary observer's role as recorder of Conner's behavior. Volunteers' attendance for all six Saturdays was requested to keep the environment as consistent as possible for measurement validity.

Materials

In preparation of the study, lesson plans developed content and goals to be pursued each week. Objectives were implemented in the form of a story—either a children's story that participants were already familiar with or one that was discussed as a group. Through this perspective, each session maintained uniqueness while incorporating an underlying theme. Supplies including butcher paper, markers, crayons, paint, shaving cream, props, and costumes were used in both art activities and dance activities, as the two forms of expression were often linked together. Upon the conclusion of sessions, participants were invited to take their artwork home with them.

Regarding measurement tools, an observation form recorded Conner's targeted behavior. This chart provided space for tallies of the amount of eye contact made, a scale of physical contact and warmth from 0 (isolated, turned away) to 4 (comfortable hug, smiling, and warm), and a table to record participation times. The form's structure allowed for both very specific observations and freedom to explain the extent of behavior.

Procedure

Informed consent and media permission forms were attained from parents upon the start of the program, therefore signing on behalf of the participants. Typically, a session started at 12 pm and provided an opening activity, art and dance segments, and a closing activity before pick-up around 2pm. Video was taken of the entire session, and recorded data filed away upon

conclusion of each day. The description below explains the different activities that were explored.

Week 1. For the first week, the group traveled to outer space through Dr. Seuss's narrative, *"There's no place like space!"* Participants tossed yarn from one person to another to create the five points of a star in the opening activity, allowing for discussion about planets, stars, and solar systems. In another portion of the room, a solar system diagram was mapped out on the floor for the group to navigate through dance. This excerpt challenged participants to dance in large movements, show what it would feel like to be weightless with their bodies, and spiral out of control as they traced the orbits on the floor. The activity promoted experimenting with and responding to various movers in the room. For the final activity, the children were given materials to build their own solar system. Constraints required them to make three different planets: one from the dance activity, another with a unique surface, and the last derived from their imagination.

Week 2. The theme for week two focused on different animals in zoo habitats. Opening the session, participants were challenged to replicate animal behavior through the movement of the human body. After watching videos of these animals, the group brainstormed different ways to portray their mannerisms. What resulted was a game of charades, where a picture of an animal would signal the participants to act out corresponding movements. Then, having cut enlarged coloring pages of animals in half, participants were asked to color and match up a front and back of two different animals. Through a collaborative effort, they designed a zoo to house these unique animals on a long piece of butcher paper. The final activity was structured in an effort to integrate art and dance together. Given a blank wall of light, the activity played with casting different shadows. Essentially, the images that were displayed on the wall were formed through participants' movement, making art and dance simultaneous.

Week 3. During week three, participants were challenged to write and perform an original story. Beforehand, a plot was prepared with significantly missing information, similar to the game MadLibs. After filling in the blanks, the children were given specific scenes (some of which were at their requests) to draw as backdrops for the staged performance. They decided where to place the backdrops in the room and directed how the narration would be acted out. These activities molded into an opportunity for the participants to have the lead role of instruction, once again requiring collaboration and teamwork.

Week 4. *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* served as the basis for the fourth week's activities. After reading through the book, the opening activity sought ways to represent different stages of a caterpillar's growth in movement. Small cardboard cutouts of fruits, vegetables, and desserts were spaced out on the other side of the room for a relay and art activity. The objective of the relay was to have the participants move around the room like inchworms, picking up the cardboard cutouts as quickly as possible. Once collected, these pieces served as integral materials for the comic strips that were made that day. On long, skinny, rectangular poster boards, the children made their own hungry caterpillars by stamping their thumbprints in sequentially connected dots. While the caterpillar served as the protagonist of these comic strips, the foods they gathered provided a foundation for other characters in their stories.

Week 5. For the fifth week, a series of activities revolved around the story *King Bidgood's in the Bathtub*. As an introduction to the session, props (fishing poles, magnetic fish, and masks) were individually crafted to help replicate the story through movement. Participants each took a specific character in the story to portray and acted out their lines by moving through the space, responding to a voice recording of the narrative. This allowed for imaginative creativity in depicting a "character" without speaking. Like King Bidgood's odd activities, the

group imagined other strange scenarios that could take place in a bathtub. They were provided with an empty tub drawn on a page, and each illustrated an activity of their choice.

Week 6. The last week touched on participants' challenges with bullying and hurt feelings through stories and metaphors. Activities brought up tough questions with sensitivity, due to the prominence of such hardships. *Smiley Shark*, a children's book about a shark who was always misunderstood by other fish, inspired the main event for the afternoon—involving a painting tarp and six cans of shaving cream. The tarp became a canvas of color that was drawn on, painted through, and shuffled across for illustration purposes. This eventually turned into a messy shaving cream fight that promoted constructive and appropriate interactions. Utilizing fun shaving cream activities, the group cultivated encouraging ways to handle bullying and the storms of life through laughter, art, and movement. As the last day, these activities ensured a farewell that would be enjoyable and positive.

The study was conducted under a correlational design, in order to analyze the strengths of various measured relationships. By calculating correlations between body language, eye contact, and participation times, I planned to gather a better understanding of how the different categories of Conner's behavior progressed and interacted over the six weeks. Because there was no control group or manipulated variables, the correlations found in linear analysis of the data offered information of greatest validity and worth.

Results

As a result, the findings of this observational study rested solely on the participants' behavior in response to the structured curriculum and progression of weekly sessions. In preparation of the study design, I wanted to see if there would be improvement in warmth, eye contact, and participation over the course of the program. The collected data on Conner supported two of these variables, specifically an increase in warmth of body language and

amount of eye contact, as shown in Figures 2 and 3. Upon arrival for the first day, he only made eye contact nine times, and his body language was recorded as a 1(friendly but distant). But by the end of the six weeks, he made eye contact 24 times and initiated a comfortable hug upon departure (a level 4 on the body language scale). A linear analysis of the two variables showed a statistically significant positive correlation ($r =. 844$, $p < .05$). In other words, with an increase of warmth in body language, the participant made eye contact significantly more often.

Contrastingly, the data collected for participation times did not support the initial hypothesis, showing longer segments of attentiveness in the beginning rather than the end. Looking at the graph in Figure 4, participation times during the dance activity dropped continually after the second week, only rising by five minutes in the final session. Art held Conner's attention for over 20 minutes in the first week, which followed a pattern of falling and rising sequentially. His final participation time was just over ten minutes, roughly half of the initial length measured in week one. Correlation coefficients represented an insignificant negative linear relationship between warmth in body language and attentiveness in dance ($r = -.402$, $p > .05$) and an even weaker insignificant positive relationship between warmth and attentiveness in art ($r = .007$, $p > .05$). Essentially, these results claimed no significant relationship between physical warmth and mental attentiveness. Though I succeeded in finding an increase in eye contact and warmth in body language, the study failed to show an increase in attentiveness throughout the various activities.

Evaluating saturation, or the extent of detail expressed in creative freedom, results displayed growth in confidence for all three participants. Peter had the lowest level of motor control and therefore maintained greatest room for improvement. His initial artwork and movement emulated action for the sake of action alone. At great assistance to his buddy, he would scribble aimlessly on paper no matter the art objective. He drizzled paint across the

surface for little rhyme or reason, and offered no meaning behind those efforts. In dance, Peter was directly influenced by the modeling of his peers, and performed little embellishment of his own. But by the end of the six weeks, he had begun to assign meaning to his art, drawing a "cow" in scribbles for the third week, and connecting a stream of fingerprints to form a caterpillar (week 4). In his movement, Peter began to experiment with different manners of approach. For example, when he was encouraged to jump, he would alternate between fast, slow, and exaggerated hops. Though there were definite moments of slipping back into aimlessness, Peter showed signs of confidence and depth of meaning behind his creativity.

Conner was always quick to finish his artwork and had to be encouraged regularly to spend more time on detail. As such, his solar system for the first week presented planets that appeared very isolated from each other on the paper. With little connection, multiple markings seemed to exist in their own space. But as the weeks carried on, Conner began to build environments around the subjects of his drawing. He grew more cohesive in his expression and started to show traces of depth perception in his artwork by the end of the study. In dance, he always seemed to have high energy and interest in the activities. Where he initially struggled to execute movements in front of the rest of the group, Conner eventually thrived in a leadership role, boldly creating his own movements from the prompts that were offered. His favorite dance activities were the ones that gave him more freedom to move on his own accord. But for the activities that were not so interesting to him, Conner was very hard to keep motivated and attentive.

David's attention to detail permeated his artwork and movement over the entire six-week experience. Having made two pictures of solar systems in the first week, one followed the criteria of the assignment exactly, and the other developed from painting brushstrokes in a freer manner. Both displayed an awareness of spatial intent, texture, and gestural movement. He had a

love for the video game, Need for Madness, and managed to incorporate that in at least one activity every week. David's most detailed drawing by far came from week five's art activity. Managing to turn a bathtub into a racecar from Need for Madness, he used vivid color and fine detail to uniquely accomplish the task. Sometimes, this detail became a problem when he lost sight of the bigger goal. Because it prevented him from making progress, his challenge over the course of the project resorted to finding a balance. Regarding dance, David could be so persistent about his opinions on activities that it became an interruption for the rest of the group. He had great potential for either being a leader for the younger children or serving as a distraction to the group as a whole. Minus a few weeks where the latter was the case, David generally brought energy, large movements, and imagination in dance. While Peter and Conner both showed a very distinct increase in saturation over the six-week period, David grew in focus and consistency.

Discussion

In an attempt to observe responses to an artistic platform of nonverbal communication, the study was successful in seeing three out of four hypotheses come to fruition. Overall, the group displayed growth in confidence and detail through completion of art and movement tasks. Regarding Conner's behavior, measurements affirmed the prediction that eye contact and body warmth would increase. Attentiveness, however, did not increase over the six weeks, failing to affirm the initial hypothesis. Inconsistent attentiveness could be due to numerous variables, spanning from Conner's disinterest in certain activities to the morning events before each session. Beyond this, it is quite possible that the more comfortable he became in the environment, the more freedom he felt to drift from the given task—either by playing around or by withdrawing from the situation.

These observations as well as the correlative data gathered over Conner's behavior represent observations with specific limitations. Due to the nature of this study, the small

population size, and the lack of a control group, I knew I would be restricted from finding causation with significant results. Without a control group, the study could not account for extraneous variables that may have influenced the observed behavior. But because the purpose of this thesis was driven towards learning how participants would respond to the various modes of nonverbal communication, the objective rested on gathering natural observation rather than manipulating variables. Future research with more resources and greater understanding could establish an experimental design to test the effectiveness of these methods with further reliability.

Outside of empirical evidence, several observations are worth mentioning regarding my own personal reflection. First, I saw the children grow more comfortable over six weeks not only with the Ball State buddies, but also with each other. On multiple occasions, older participants initiated contact with younger ones by offering help or giving encouragement. The varied art and dance activities then served as a foundation for interpersonal communication. Where poor choices or negative thoughts were displayed, the arts easily addressed and redirected those concerns towards more positive options. And each week, participants had visible excitement for being in attendance. Realistically, these children have limited opportunity for extracurricular activities. Because they are seen as different, they are excluded from many of the programs available to boys their age. Through the challenges of this project, however, I saw them thrive in their artistic efforts as they discovered uniquely creative solutions.

The goal in therapies for individuals with autism has been and continues to be a unified one: finding a connection amidst a cognitively isolated world. Whether that means making eye contact, staying on task, or having an outlet of expression, therapy provides an accepting environment that offers challenge and encouragement. As I endeavored to meet this goal through integration of two art forms, improvement of the group's creativity and strengthening of

relationships suggested immense potential. Ultimately, the arts hone in on the strengths of individuals with autism, allowing for a sense of understanding that is so often absent.

Unfortunately, there are still many gaps in my findings, both in my knowledge of expressive art therapy methods and the results gathered from this study. Beyond speculation, I cannot say what caused the depletion of Conner's attentiveness. The correlations that were calculated offer information on the strength of relationships alone, and provide no explanation of cause. Were I to do a study like this again, I would structure a controlled experimental design to determine what variables have significant influence on participation and attentiveness. After all, withdrawal is the trademark-isolating characteristic of autistism spectrum disorder. Because I see the opportunity that the arts offer in making a difference, I long to pursue future avenues of arts therapy—to break through the isolation, to discourage passivity, to encourage interaction.

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Date

Evaluation Part 1:

Participant's Interaction with Me

# of times participant makes eye contact:				
Level of Body Language/Warmth:				
0	1	2	3	4
Turned Away	Waving; Friendly but distance	High fives	Hugs, but still hesitant	Comfortable hug, smiling and warm
Describe exact behavior:				

Evaluation Part 2:

Time Spent in participation before distraction or withdrawal (for first three segments)

Opening Segment			
Dance Segment			
Art Segment			

Fig. 1. Observation form used to record data.

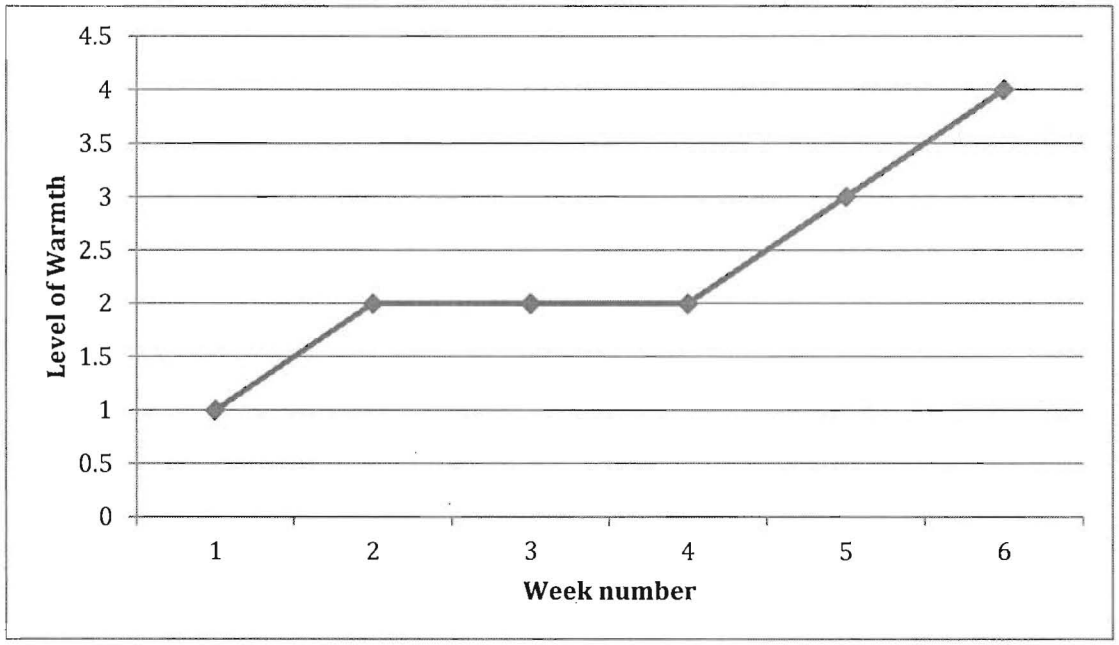

Fig. 2. Conner's measured warmth displayed in body language over the six-week study.

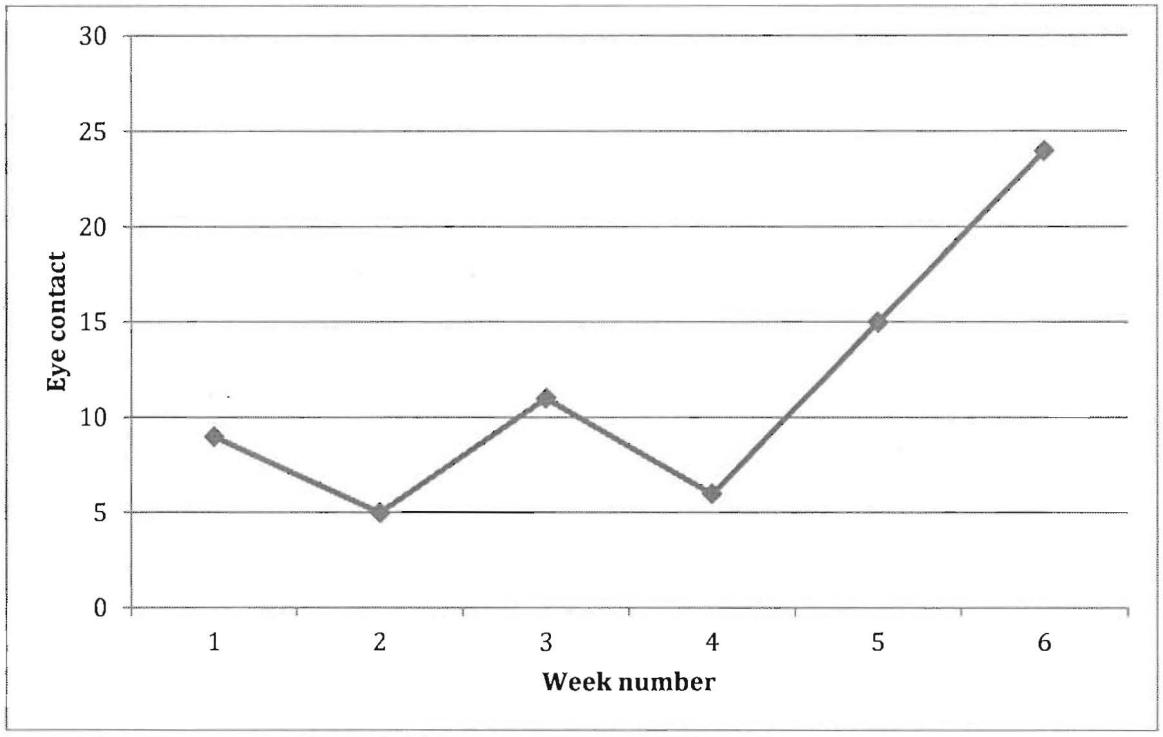

Fig. 3. Quantity of eye contact made by Conner during opening activity throughout the six- week study.

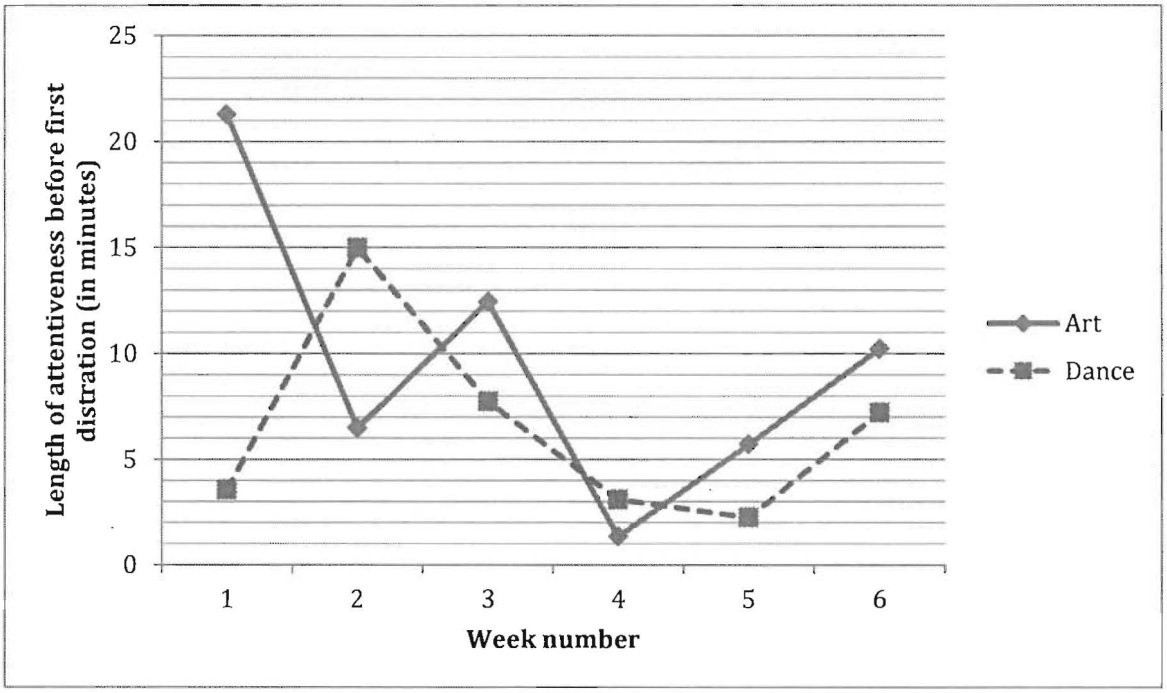

Fig. 4. Length of Conner's attentiveness during art and dance activities before the first distraction, as measured in minutes.

Office of Research Integrity
Institutional Review Board (IRB)
2000 University Avenue
Muncie, IN 47306-0155
Phone: 765-285-5070

DATE:	April 25, 2014
TO:	Julie Matlik
FROM:	Ball State University IRB
RE:	IRB protocol # 569111-1
TITLE:	The Artist Within: A Thesis on the Arts and Special Needs Populations
SUBMISSION TYPE:	New Project
ACTION:	APPROVED
DECISION DATE:	April 23, 2014
EXPIRATION DATE:	April 22, 2015
REVIEW TYPE:	**Expedited:** This protocol had been determined by the board to meet the definition of minimal risk.

The Institutional Review Board has approved your New Project for the above protocol, effective April 23, 2014 through April 22, 2015. All research under this protocol must be conducted in accordance with the approved submission and in accordance with the principles of the Belmont Report.

Review Type:

	Category 1: Clinical studies of drugs and medical devices
	Category 2: Collection of blood samples by Finger stick, Heel stick, Ear stick, or Venipuncture
	Category 3: Prospective collection of biological specimens for research purposes by noninvasive means
	Category 4: Collection of data through Non-Invasive Procedures Routinely Employed in Clinical Practice, excluding procedures involving Material (Data, Documents, Records, or Specimens) that have been collected, or will be collected solely for non-research purposes (such as medical treatment or diagnosis)
	Category 5: Research involving materials that have been collected or will be collected solely for non-research purposes.
	Category 6: Collection of Data from Voice, Video, Digital, or Image Recordings Made for Research Purposes

X	**Category 7:** Research on Individual or Group Characteristics or Behavior or Research Employing Survey, Interview Oral History, Focus Group, Program Evaluation, Human Factors, Evaluation, or Quality Assurance Methodologies
	Category 8: Continuing review of research previously approved by the convened IRB
	Category 9: Continuing review of research, not conducted under an investigational new drug application or investigational device exemption where categories 2-8 do not apply but the IRB has determined and documented at a convened meeting that the research involves no greater than minimal risk and not additional risks have been identified.

As a reminder, it is the responsibility of the P.I. and/or faculty sponsor to inform the IRB in a timely manner:

- when the project is completed,
- if the project is to be continued beyond the approved end date,
- if the project is to be modified,
- if the project encounters problems, or
- if the project is discontinued.

Any of the above notifications must be addressed in writing and submitted electronically to the IRB (http://www.bsu.edu/irb). Please reference the IRB protocol number given above in any communication to the IRB regarding this project. Be sure to allow sufficient time for review and approval of requests for modification or continuation. If you have questions, please contact Jennifer Weaver at 765-285-5034 or jmweaver@bsu.edu.

In the case of an adverse event and/or unanticipated problem, you will need to submit written documentation of the event to IRBNet under this protocol number and you will need to directly notify the Office of Research Integrity (http://www.bsu.edu/irb) **within 5 business days**. If you have questions, please contact (ORI Staff).

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the completion of the project or as required under Federal and/or State regulations (ex. HIPAA, FERPA, etc.). Additional requirements may apply.

Bryan Byers, PhD/Chair
Institutional Review Board

Christopher Mangelli, JD, MS, MEd, CIP/Director
Office of Research Integrity

Office of Research Integrity
Institutional Review Board (IRB)
2000 University Avenue
Muncie, IN 47306-0155
Phone: 765-285-5070
http://cms.bsu.edu/about/administrativeoffices/researchintegrity

BALL STATE UNIVERSITY

IRB HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH APPLICATION AND PROTOCOL FORM

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR INFORMATION

The Principal Investigator (PI) MUST be a Ball State University Faculty, Staff, Graduate Student or Undergraduate Student research.

Principal Investigator Name: Julie Eileen Matlik

Current Degree: BA Department: Honors College: Medallion Scholar

Email: jematlik@bsu.edu Phone Number: +1 (317) 504-1876

Affiliation: BSU Undergraduate Student

Principal Investigator Research Experience:

1. Have you ever been a Principal Investigator? ○ Yes ◉ No
2. How many years have you been conducting research in any capacity? 0 Years
3. Have any of your prior studies been suspended or terminated by BSU or a third party? ○ Yes ◉ No
4. Have you or any member of your research staff ever been sanctioned for unethical behavior in research activities? ○ Yes ◉ No

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR AGREEMENT:

☒ I have read and understand the Ball State University's "Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research," as stated in the Faculty and Professional Personnel Handbook, and I agree:

a. to accept responsibility for the scientific and ethical conduct of this research study,
b. to obtain IRB approval prior to revising and altering the research protocol, informed consent, or study documents, and
c. to immediately report any serious adverse events and/or unanticipated problems as a results of this study to the IRB within 24 hours.

FACULTY ADVISOR INFORMATION

If the Principal Investigator (PI) is a GRADUATE STUDENT with Ball State University, a BSU Faculty Member advising or supervising the student must be listed below:

Faculty Advisor Name: Ryan Hourigan

Current Degree: PhD Department: School of Music

Email: rmhourigan@bsu.edu Phone Number: +1 (765) 285-5501

FACULTY ADVISOR ASSURANCE STATEMENT

As the Faculty Advisor for this study, I certify that I have reviewed and support this protocol and approve the merit of this research project and the competency of the investigator(s) to conduct the project. My involvement in this study is as follow (Check Box):

◉ I will be involved in this project. My name is listed and my responsibilities (described in the Key Personnel section) include supervision and oversight of this project.

KEY PERSONNEL

List all Key Personnel (including Faculty Advisor), other than the PI, who will have a role in the research project *(Thesis and Dissertation Committee Members are not required unless they will work with you on your research project)*:

Add More Personnel

Personnel Name	Department/ Organization	Role on the Study	Responsibilities
Ryan M. Hourigan, PhD	School of Music	Faculty Advisor	Oversee the Project, ensure security measures are taken, and provide guidance and input as needed.
Emily Folland	Education, Special Ed.	Student Assistant	Help with video, and any other odds and ends I may need assistance in, i.e. making observations, timing certain outcomes of different activities

HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH TRAINING

COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI)

As of January 1, 2010, Ball State University policy requires that all Principal Investigators, Faculty Advisors, and all Key Personnel complete the CITI Training. To comply with the educational requirement, you and all key personnel (including faculty advisor) must have completed the online training modules on the protection of human subjects. For more information and link to CITI's website, please go to the Office of Research Integrity website.

Have you and all key personnel completed the required online training modules? ◉ Yes ○ No

NOTE: If this is your first BSU IRB submission, please include a PDF copy of your CITI Training Certificate, along with your Key Personnel.

Responsible Conduct of Research Training Modules (RCR)- If your project is federally funded by the National Science Foundation, you and all key personnel (including faculty advisor), must complete the Responsible Conduct of Research Training Modules on CITI, along with the Basic/Refresher Course or Biomedical Course.

OTHER TRAINING

Are there any specialized training(s) required for your project (i.e., certification for medical procedure, training in crisis response, etc.)?

○ Yes ◉ No

EXPORT AND DEEMED EXPORT CONTROL

The information below is required to be answered as part of the Federal Export and Deemed Export Control Regulations and as part of Ball State University's Export/Deemed Export Control Program. These regulations apply to any *transfer of, release of, or access to, controlled technologies/organisms either to a foreign country or by a non-permanent resident foreign national in the United States.*

KEY DEFINITIONS:

Foreign National: An individual who is not a natural-born US citizen or;
(1) is granted permanent residence, as demonstrated by the issuance of a permanent resident visa (i.e., "Green Card");
(2) is granted US citizenship; or
(3) is granted status as a "protected person" under 8 U.S.C. 1324b(a)(3).

Dual-Use: The technology/organism has both civilian and military uses.

Fundamental Research: "...basic and applied research in science and engineering where the resulting information is ordinarily published and shared broadly within the scientific community." (15 CFR §734.8) In general, for research to be considered "fundamental," it needs to have unrestricted access and/or dissemination (such as through publications, public presentations, available on the internet, etc.). Proprietary results/products (or where these will not be publically available) are generally not considered fundamental research.

Released: When technology or organisms are available to foreign nationals for visual inspection (such as reading technical specifications, plans, blueprints, etc.); when technology is exchanged orally; or when technology is made available by practice or application under the guidance of persons with knowledge of the technology.

Technology: Specific information necessary for the "development," "production," or "use" of a product.

Use: Specific information necessary for the operation, installation (including on-site installation), maintenance (checking), repair, overhaul and refurbishing of a product.

1. Does the research involve any of the situations below?

a. *US Federally funded and the funder will control/restrict the release of research results/products.*
b. *Research is funded by and/or will flow through a foreign government*
c. *Involves proprietary technologies and/or computer/communications source codes.*
d. *Uses technologies/organisms that are classified as "dual-use."*
e. *The research/data/product has (or will have) release and/or access restrictions (beyond reasonable/customary review period).*
f. *Research involves classified information/technology.*
g. *Technology/software/data being used is under the exclusive control of the US Government.*
h. *Involves controlled/restricted weapons, law enforcement, security/surveillance, and/or non-publically available encryption technologies and/or information.*
i. *Uses GPS technologies in a foreign country.*
j. *Technology/software/information will be transferred to, released to and/or left in a foreign country.*
k. *Involves items known to be on the Commerce Control List by the Government Printing Office (GPO). The file is updated every 48 hours.*
l. *A member of the research team is a **non-permanent resident foreign national**.*

○ Yes (Complete this section) ◉ No

If the research/data/product is classified as "fundamental research" or determined to be exempt from Federal Export Control or Deemed Export Control regulations then no special license(s) will be required. If controlled Exports/Deemed Exports are (or will be) involved, then specific Federal Licenses may be required.

RESEARCH PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title: The Artist Within: A Thesis on the Arts and Special Needs Populations

***The Project Title must match all documents and IRBNet.**

SUBJECT INFORMATION

Total Number of Participants (Estimate or Range): Roughly 10 kids Gender: Both Male and Female

Age of Participants: Minimum Age 5 years old Maximum Age 16 years old

SUBJECT POPULATION

Check all that apply:

☐ Normal Adult Population (18 years or older)

☐ Students (18 years or older)

☒ Children (Minors)/Students (0-17 years)*

☐ Pregnant Women (Physical Experiments, Examinations, or Medical Research)*

☐ Prisoners*

☒ People with Diminished Capacities*

☐ Persons undergoing and/or receiving Health, Medical, Rehabilitative, Treatment/Services, etc. *

☐ Persons undergoing Social/Psychological Counseling*

☐ Other (Explain):

*Protected Population: This will require either Expedited or Full Board Review. Please explain the purpose of using this population:

My project is focused on how the arts are effective in creating a positive environment for kids with special needs to grow in confidence, social skill sets, and creativity. This study is not about "testing" these individuals. Instead, I hope to utilize my already built relationship with kids in the Prism Project as an informative and growing foundation for making connections and constructing a "how-to" manual for others to create similar programs. The competency of the population will most likely be varied. The older, higher-functioning level of kids have writing, reading, and understanding competency (ages 9-16 years old). Those who are younger, may be able to write their names, and understand what you ask of them, but may not be able to read (ages 5-8 years old). For the purposes of this project, I will not select participants with severe autistic characteristics, so that the whole group can participate and work together on relatively the same level without major behavioral issues.

SUBJECT RECRUITMENT

1. Will the research project be advertised on any media? ○ Yes ◉ No

RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES

Describe your recruitment procedures:

I am utilizing the enrolled performers in the Prism Project as my population of special needs children in the Muncie area (a total of roughly thirty children from the age of five to sixteen). I will recruit from these students, offering up the opportunity for an extended arts experience through participation in my thesis in the Fall of 2014. Both parents and children will be made aware that their participation in the Prism project will not change regardless of whether or not they choose to participate in the study. I hope to recruit anywhere in the range of eight to ten students.

SUBJECT INCLUSION/EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Inclusion Criteria: A set of conditions that must be met in order for subject(s) to participate in the study (including age of the participants)

In order to be eligible to participate in this study, a participant must be a child involved in the Prism Project, a special needs performing arts project on campus. As stated previously, the age range of these participants should be no younger than five and no older than sixteen.

Exclusion Criteria: A set of conditions that the subject(s) may not be allowed to participate in the study.

Anyone excluding enrolled performers in the Prism project will not be allowed to participate in this study.

POTENTIAL RISKS/DISCOMFORTS TO THE SUBJECT(S)

Will there be any anticipated or potential risks or discomforts to the subject(s) during the study? ◉ Yes ○ No

(The federal regulations (45 CFR 46) define minimal risk, "...the probability and magnitude of harm or discomfort anticipated in the research are not greater in and of themselves that those ordinarily encountered in daily life or during the performance of routine physical or psychological examinations or tests.")

Participants in the study will be asked to take part in several different art and dance activities that focus on various achievable objectives. Throughout the study, interviews will be done with some of the participants to measure likability

If Yes, Explain:

and successfulness of different techniques. These interviews will not be audio or video recorded, but will exist solely in the written notes I take from the kids' responses. The only anticipated risks from participating in these tasks are as follows: potential discomfort with questions asked in interviews or anxiety from not wanting to take part in a particular dance or art activity. Any child that is asked to do an interview will have the choice to say yes or no to participating, and will be informed during the assent process that he or she may choose not to answer any question that makes him/her uncomfortable for any reason. Participation in activities will be encouraged to produce a positive experience for each participant, but will not be forced. After the recruiting process, consent forms for parents and assent forms for participants will be issued for any further clarification of potential risks or expected benefits from participating in this study.

DECEPTION/COERCION OF SUBJECT(S)

Deception- *Witholding information for the purpose of the study.*
Coercion- *Intimidating, threatening, or force to participate.*

Will this project involve either Deception or Coercion? ○ Yes ◉ No

MINIMIZING THE SUBJECT(S) RISK

Will there be any precautions and safeguards required to minimize the risk(s) to the subject? ◉ Yes ○ No

If Yes, describe the precautions and safeguards that will be in place to minimize the risks to the subject. *For research involving the risk or physical injury, describe the available emergency care in the event of a research-related injury. For research involving psychological risks, describe any plans for intervention (including reporting that may be mandated by federal/state law or licensure) and the events or subject responses that would prompt the exercise of such plans.*

To help prevent and minimize any risk of anxiety, I will approach this study in many similar ways to Prism. First, I will enlist willing and able-bodied Ball State students who are already volunteers as Prism buddies this spring. Both their knowledge of working with special needs students and their experience with the very kids who will act as participants in this study will add to security for the kids involved. These volunteers will NOT be listed as key personnel, as their involvement in my study will look no different from their responsibilities with Prism. Their presence is solely to keep the participants comfortable and engaged each Saturday. The ratio of this pairing should be one to one. Ryan Hourigan, my advisor will be present if any major behavioral issues become a problem. These things all contribute to precautions in minimizing any risks that may occur on a Saturday meeting. Counseling services of a local clinic are made available on the Parental Consent form, should those services be needed.

SUBJECT AND STUDY BENEFITS

Will there be any benefits to the subject and/or to the study? ◉ Yes ○ No

If Yes, Explain:

The benefits that participants experience through this study include feeling a sense of accomplishment in the challenges given them, experiencing the arts in a fun and unique way, and participating in an extracurricular activity that promotes positive social skills. The kids already look forward to coming to Prism every week, because it is their one chance to experience something like a normal kid. I know that many of the kids would be more than excited to have a similar opportunity in the fall, especially because Prism is only a spring semester program. Alongside this, busy parents get the chance to have a reprieve from the strained responsibilities of parenting a child with special needs. By branching off of the Prism Project with this study in the fall, I plan to enhance the kids' experience with well-rounded arts-based activities. In creating a manual from the things I have gathered from this study, and my experiences/ discoveries over the past four years, I will work to make this positive environment easier for others to cultivate by giving them a step-by-step creative instructional manual.

PROJECT SITE LOCATION

Provide the following information where you will conduct your study (location of data collection, interviews, etc.)

Check all that apply:

☒ Ball State University Campus (including Burris Laboratory School)

Building: MU Room Number(s): 303

☐ Off-Site Locations or Schools

☐ Internet (Be sure to read any policy regarding data ownership and protection)

☐ Online Survey Sites (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Qualtrics
- ☐ Survey Monkey
- ☐ InQsit
- ☐ Other

☐ IU Ball Memorial Hospital (Contact Alfreda Bright- abright@iuhealth.org. BMH's IRB)

☐ International Countries

☐ U.S. Based Field Study

☐ Other

LETTER OF SUPPORT: Any research that is conducted at a non-BSU institutions or organizations is required to obtain a Letter of Support. The Letter of Support must be on the institution or organization's letterhead and signed by a person of authority to grant access to the site for the study (i.e., Director, Manager, Principal, Superintendent, etc.). The Letter of Support must be uploaded on IRBNet as part of your package submission. An email message is **NOT** sufficient to meet this requirement.

In cases where sites, agencies, etc., have not been identified yet (original submission), please indicate this in the Application and make sure to upload the letter on your IRBNet project number once the letter is obtained. This is handled as a Modification process once the project has been approved.

COLLABORATIVE/MULTI-SITE RESEARCH PROJECTS

Will the proposed research project be conducted as a collaborative research (i.e., research that involves two or more institutions/ organizations that hold **Federalwide Assurances*** and have duly authorized IRB's)?

***Federalwide Assurance**- An institution committing to the Department of Health Human Services that will comply with the requirements in the HHS Protection of Human Subjects regulations at **45 CFR part 46**.

○ Yes ◉ No

FUNDING

Have you applied for funding or have receive funding for your project? ○ Yes ◉ No

DATA- COLLECTION, STORAGE, AND SECURITY

1. Will any information regarding the participant's identity (e.g., name, DOB, SSN, ID Number, address, phone, etc.) be collected on Informed Consent(s) or Study Documents?

◉ Yes ○ No

If Yes, explain why and what security measures will be taken:

Their names will only be gathered to ensure informed consent/parental consent and child assent forms are obtained to fulfill IRB requirements. These signed forms will be maintained in file cabinet and will be shredded after one year, following the conclusion of the study. For any reporting, pseudonyms will be used instead of their actual names. Consent and media forms will ask for parents' permission to use video recording and photographs of their children's dancing and artwork for the final product of the manual. The parents will be given copies of parent consent/child assent forms so they have a reference for their own records.

If you are collecting identifiable information, will the information be stored with the participant's responses?

○ Yes ◉ No

2. Are you planning on using the participant's identifiable information on publications or publications?

(•) Yes ( ) No

If Yes, explain: I plan on incorporating both the recording of the Prism Project 2014 show as well as photographs and video of their art work and dances during the duration of the six week study in the "how-to" manual for my senior thesis. This material will be used, as long as I receive parental consent and a sign off on the media forms, giving me the permission and rights to use that information. Because the performers' names are in the show casting list, and because participants will be captured on video, identifiable information will be present in the final published work.

3. Will you be using Audio or Video Recording for your project?

(•) Yes ( ) No

Will the recordings be used for presentations or publications?

(•) Yes ( ) No

If Yes, you will need to have the participant sign the Media Permission Forms (with BSU Release or without BSU Release)

4. Where will the data (electronic/paper) be stored during and after the study is complete? (Check all that apply):

- ☐ Locked Cabinet/Office
- ☒ Password Protected Computer/Flash Drive/DVD/CD or other Storage Media
- ☐ Home
- ☐ Other

5. How long will you keep the data (raw and final)? Raw data of sessions: 1 year; Final data (photo/video): Indefinitely

If your data (raw and final) is retained indefinitely, please provide an explanation for why and make sure that you have an explanation on the informed consent:

There are two different aspects of data that will be gathered for this study, the first used solely for measuring qualitative data and the second used to capture the art and dance work that kids do over the course of six weeks. I plan to record Saturday sessions for the purpose of making observations in qualitative data. This is what I refer to as "raw data" and will be destroyed after 1 year. This allows me the chance to review and measure any observations that would be difficult to gather while running the activities on Saturdays. While utilizing this information, all data will be stored on a password protected computer, and no one but myself or my advisor will have access to it. Final projects that the kids work on will be properly photographed/videoed in a performance setting to add to the how-to manual indefinitely. Once again, photographs of the kids' artwork and videoed dance exercises will only be used if parental consent is obtained.

6. Who will have access to the raw and final data besides yourself? (Check all that apply):

- ☒ Faculty Advisor
- ☐ Research Team (Co-PI, Research Assistant, Graduate Assistant, etc.)
- ☐ Off Campus Collaborator or Consultant
- ☐ Sponsor
- ☐ Federal Agency (NIH, FDA, NSF, etc.)
- ☐ Other

DATA CONFIDENTIALITY/ANONYMITY

Anonymous Data: Defined by where the researcher(s) may not identify of the subject with his/her data at any time during the study.

Confidential Data: Defined by when coding the identity of the subject and his or her data by using personal identifiers, there exists a means for identifying the subject.

Indicate whether your data is Anonymous or Confidential and explain what provisions will be taken to maintain privacy and security:

All qualitative data gathered in this study will remain confidential, ensured by the fact that no identifiable information will be included in any interviews, observations, or activities done with the performers as a whole. Pseudonyms will be used if necessary. Parents will be asked for their permission to use video and photography of the participants' artwork and dancing in the final product of the project. I will not utilize any photo or video of children whose parents who do not agree to the use of this media.

SPECIAL TYPES OF DATA

1. **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**

A. Will educational records or information found in educational records, as defined by FERPA be use?

○ Yes ◉ No

2. **Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)**

A. Will health, medical, or psychological records or information found in medical/health records, as defined under HIPAA be used?

○ Yes ◉ No

COMPENSATION

1. Are subjects being paid or receiving incentives for participating in the study?	○ Yes	◉ No
2. Are subjects being reimbursed for expenses (travel, gas, food, hotel, etc.)?	○ Yes	◉ No
3. Will students receive extra credit for a course if they participate in the study?	○ Yes	◉ No
4. Will students receive class or departmental research credit for their participation?	○ Yes	◉ No
5. Is there a completion bonus?	○ Yes	◉ No
6. Will there be compensation for research-related injury?	○ Yes	◉ No

7. Other (Please Explain): Any volunteers to be Ball State Buddies for the kids over the course of this study will participate because of their personal enjoyment of working with the kids. No compensation will be offered.

If you are using BSU funds, you will need to contact the BSU Office of University Controller (765-285-8444) or visit their website for procedures and policies regarding tax information to be collected from participants.

SUBJECT FINANCIAL EXPENSES

Will subjects have any financial expenses to participate in the study (i.e., travel, gas, food, hotel, etc.)? ◉ Yes ○ No

NOTE: If a subject has to travel to the location site to participate in the study via car, plane, train, bus, etc., they will incur financial expenses.

If Yes, Please Explain: Parents will have to bring their kids to the site on campus in order to participate in the experience. But parents are eager and willing for this opportunity, as their kids don't get much of a chance to participate in extracurricular activities associated with their schools.

STUDY PROTOCOL

STUDY PURPOSE

State the objectives of the research and, when appropriate, any hypotheses you have developed for the research.

Through my thesis, my main goal is to bring the participants involved a unique challenge through different mediums of art. More specifically, the expected outcomes of this thesis/study are as follows: I intend to investigate the possibilities of dance and art in a positively constructive environment for kids with special needs, evaluate the methods I have used concerning the effectiveness of those methods, and create a "how-to" manual involving documentation of my experiences and successes for others to replicate. The purpose behind these three categories of my thesis is to find out how to cultivate a symbiotic relationship between two interdisciplinary forms of art that are so often held separate from each other.

RATIONALE

Explain the need for the research. Describe the data that the project is expected to provide and how the data will contribute to existing information in the field. Provide a concise description of the previous work in the field.

NOTE: If you are planning on using students in your class as research participants, please explain why you want to use them in your study.

As art and dance both have a strong hold on my own life as an artist, I truly believe there is much to be gained from pushing the limits in a therapeutic setting. For the kids involved in Prism, their experiences every Saturday give them a chance to succeed. But I believe that more can be accomplished through an interdisciplinary focus of art and dance not as two separate entities but as two branches of the same core. Furthermore, the fields of art therapy and dance therapy are only beginning to take off. Few, if any, have sought to combine the two into one focus. By attempting to do so through this study, my efforts will move towards discovering new and exciting possibilities for people in the fields of art and dance therapy and for the kids involved.

Much of the focus of this study will have an artistic perspective, which leads to a significant amount of qualitative data. But to avoid a biased or entirely subjective final product, empirical measurements in three specific areas will work to document success, growth, and weakness in the different methods attempted. These areas, indicated as participation, retention of information, and attentiveness will be investigated and expanded upon from research gathered in the past, and recorded data taken over the course of the semester. The participation category will look at what activities are effective in getting participants to accomplish what is asked of them (i.e. the number of how many kids actually complete the task). Retention will measure how accurately information is remembered by participants over the duration of the study (through evaluations of cognitive retention and ability to repeat what was learned from previous weeks). Lastly, attentiveness will seek to discover the most effective ways of gaining and retaining the attention of participants--through things like attention getters and methods of running the "classroom-like" setting (i.e. measuring the length of time it takes to get every participant's attention). This may also include measurements of social interactions with their buddies and with the other participants in the room, as I intend to measure, not just their attentiveness to me, but their attentiveness to the environment around them.

RESEARCH REFERENCES/CITATIONS

List any references/citations that you researched based on your study purpose and rationale for your project. If there are no references or citations used for your project, please explain why.

Parteli, L. (1995). Aesthetic Listening: Contributions of dance/movement therapy to the psychic understanding of motor stereotypes and distortions in Autism and psychosis in childhood and adolescence. The Arts in Psychotherapy, 22, 241-247.

Adler, J. (2003). American Dance Therapy Association 37th annual conference keynote address: from autism to the discipline of authentic movement. American Journal of Dance Therapy, 25, 5-16.

Epp, K. M. (2008). Outcome-based evaluation of a social skills program using art therapy and group therapy for children on the autism spectrum. Children & Schools, 30, 27-36.

Eubanks, P. K. (1997). Art is a visual language. Visual Arts Research, 23, 31-35.

Stanton-Jones, K. (1992). An introduction to dance movement therapy in psychiatry. New York, NY: Routledge.

Feder, B., & Feder, E. (1998). The art and science of evaluation in the arts therapies: How do you know what's working? Springfield, IL: Thomas Books.

Payne, H. (1992). Shut in, shut out: dance movement therapy with children and adolescents. In H. Payne (Ed.), Dance movement therapy: theory and practice (pp. 39-80). New York: NY: Routlege.

Erfer, Tina. (1995). Treating children with autism in a public school system. In F. J. Levy, J. P. Fried, & F. Leventhal (Eds.) Dance and other expressive art therapies: When words are not enough (pp.191-212). New York, NY: Routlege

This is the current running list of references that I researched based upon the purpose and rationale of my project. Much of the art therapies (focusing specifically on art therapy and dance therapy) have been investigated individually, but few if any have sought to combine the two together. These references look at the methods of arts therapies used in the past and the manners in which people have measured the effectiveness of those methods. All will help to inform what I intend to accomplish next semester with my thesis.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Describe the study and design in detail and all procedures in which the subject will be asked to participate. If surveys and questionnaires are used for the study, how will they be returned to the researcher? If the research involves more than one visit to the research location, specify the procedures to take place at each session, the amount of time for each session, the amount of time between sessions, and the total duration of the sessions. If multiple researchers will be involved in the project, identify who will conduct which procedure(s).

The study will take place over the course of six weeks in the Fall of 2014, lasting 2 hours every Saturday until the six weeks are up. Each Saturday session will take place as described: Ball State Buddies (the volunteers enlisted from students who participated in Prism 2014) will meet parents at the front doors of the MU building, and participants will be checked in and individually escorted up to MU 303 for the start of the afternoon activities. The student volunteers will NOT be conducting any of the research. Their roles with the kids will remain exactly the same as they are in Prism, keeping each child engaged in the activities presented through one-to-one pairings. Therefore, they should not need Citi training, as their role is consistent with that of Prism. An initial large group game/activity will take

place to acclimate the participants to the environment and to one another. This might include acting in a certain scene (i.e. acting like dinosaurs/traveling through time) or sitting in a circle and sharing something about their weeks for the rest of the group to hear. Then one dance activity followed by one art activity will be proctored, allowing for the manipulation and measurement of the three different independent variables discussed (participation, retention, and attentiveness). To prevent error, these two activities will be video recorded (some of which may be used as visual aids for the "how-to" manual) and measurements will be double-checked, based upon these recordings. The last activity will seek to accomplish a task that involves art and dance at the same time. This is where creative processing comes into play--and hopefully where I will discover how art and dance are similar and interrelated. To help clarify what I mean by this, an example of what I intend to try with the kids will entail a huge beige tarp laid on the floor for kids then to dip their feet in paint and dance across. At the conclusion of the afternoon activities, any messes will be cleaned up, and upon returning each child to their parents, participants will be signed out. This will continue with some flexibility, leaving ample time for interviewing participants on their thoughts about the activities throughout the course of the study. At the conclusion of each day, any artwork may be taken home for participants to keep. Finally, after the six-week duration of the study has ended, a debriefing of all participants will take place.

INFORMED CONSENT

Please indicate what type(s) of Informed Consent (IC) will be used for this study? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Adult (18 years or older)
- ☒ Parental Permission (Minors: 0-17 years old)
- ☒ Child Assent (Minors: 0-17 years old- This must be written in age appropriate language)

Informed Consent Process/Signature Waiver

Are you applying for an alteration of the Informed Consent process or a waiver of the Informed Consent signature requirement? ○ Yes ◉ No

PLEASE NOTE: If English is NOT the primary language of the participants, then the Informed Consent must be also be translated in the participant's native language. Include the translated Informed Consent with your package and a statement as to how (or by whom) the Informed Consent was translated.

PROJECT DOCUMENTS

Check the box(es) of ALL the documents you submitted for your project on IRBNet:

- ☒ Application and Protocol Form
- ☐ Adult Informed Consent(s)
- ☒ Parental Permission Consent (for Minors)
- ☒ Child Assent (for Minors)
- ☒ Recruitment Letter(s)
- ☒ Survey/Questionnaire/Interview Questions
- ☐ Data Collection Forms
- ☐ HIPAA/FERA Documents
- ☒ Media Permission Form(s)
- ☐ Letters of Support
- ☐ Debriefing Letter(s)
- ☒ CITI Training Certificates
- ☐ Other (Explain):

IRBNET ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE:

The new package created for submission for your project must be electronically signed in IRBNet by you, the Principal Investigator (and Faculty Advisor, if you are a student). Your signature indicates your certification that the information provided in this document is accurate and current.